

# NETWORK



Tempe  
Community  
Council

A publication of Tempe Community Council.  
Connecting those in need with those who care.

WINTER 2005

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## SELF SUFFICIENCY, NOT WELFARE — The EITC at Work—

It has been nearly 12 years since President Clinton, in his 1993 State of the Union Address, famously declared an end to “welfare as we know it.” Since the enactment of welfare reform in 1996, the issue has nearly dropped out of the nation’s consciousness, as illustrated by the lack of attention it received during the recent presidential election. Does this mean that people are no longer struggling to make ends meet? That assistance is no longer needed? Unfortunately, the answer to both of these questions is a resounding, “No.”

In fact, according to a December 2<sup>nd</sup> *Washington Post* article, between 2000 and 2003, the nation’s poverty rate grew from 11.3 percent to 12.5 percent. This means that the number of people in poverty grew by 4 million in three years, including 1.3 million children. But “welfare,” in the form of entitlements, is no more; and we aren’t likely to see it’s return.

Welfare reform emphasized returning people to the workforce by expanding supports for low-earning working families, while making it more difficult for those not in the workforce to receive assistance. One of the expanded supports for working families is the **Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)**. The EITC is now the largest federal aid program targeted to the working poor. It provides a lump sum payment that returns money from overpayment of taxes to workers with modest incomes. Although the EITC has been in existence since 1975, the program has expanded significantly over the years to boost families out of poverty and into more “moderate income” categories.

Many people are working in jobs that don’t pay enough to allow them to support their families *Continued on page 2...*

## Event Spotlight:

*“Tempe Empty Bowls”*  
Coming soon...



*Participants try to decide which bowls to choose at the Tempe Empty Bowls Event to benefit United Food Bank’s Kids Café Program.*

Thousands of beautiful hand-crafted bowls will be available at the fourth annual Tempe Empty Bowls Event on Friday, February 25 and Saturday, February 26. *read more on page 7...*

## SELF SUFFICIENCY, NOT WELFARE — THE EITC AT WORK—

or make ends meet. Through the EITC, families earning minimum wage can, in effect, increase their earnings by up to 40 percent, the equivalent of roughly a \$2 per hour raise.

The amount of the credit is determined by the size and income level of the family.

- Families with two or more children can receive a credit of up to \$4100
- Families with one child can receive a credit of up to \$2500
- Childless workers can receive a credit of up to \$375

Surveys show that recipients use the tax credit to pay utility bills and credit card bills, buy clothes for children and make long-deferred purchases of furniture and household items. Many also use the cash to pay for college tuition or to buy a used car to get to work.

According to a recent study published by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, approximately 4.8 million people, including 2.6 million children are removed from poverty as a result of the federal EITC, making the EITC the most significant government program for lifting children out of poverty.

That being said, however, not nearly the number of people who are eligible to receive the credit take advantage of it. The IRS estimates that there are thousands of households in Tempe and Guadalupe alone that are “income eligible” to receive the EITC, but do not claim it, amounting to an estimate of up to **8 million dollars in unclaimed credits**.

By not claiming the credit, low-income workers (those most likely to be living on the edge, paycheck to paycheck), are missing out on dollars that

could help them meet basic needs or even get ahead.

### THE TEMPE EITC INITIATIVE

To increase awareness of the EITC and the number of working individuals and families from our communities who claim it, Tempe Community Council, in partnership with the City of Tempe, the Town of Guadalupe and the IRS, initiated a pilot project, currently in its third year. Tempe Community Council sponsors Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites, where volunteer community members prepare tax returns for those who cannot prepare their own or cannot afford professional help. The goals of this initiative are to make the Tempe community aware of the

**“In the past two years, Tempe Community Council, along with its initiative partners, has succeeded in returning over \$1,346,000.00 to Tempe residents.”**

EITC, assist them in filing for the credit and then provide guidance to individuals and families on how this money can be used to create opportunities for themselves.

Over the course of the 3-year pilot project, the

TCC EITC Initiative has expanded to include four components: public awareness, volunteer recruitment and training, free tax preparation and financial literacy support services.

With the help of nearly fifty volunteers, free tax preparation and electronic filing will be offered to working families making \$40,000 or less a year and individuals making \$20,000 or less a year at the following Tempe and Guadalupe sites: Arizona Mills Mall, Westside and Escalante Multi-generational Centers and South Mountain Com-

*For additional information about the Tempe EITC program, please visit our website:  
[www.tempe.gov/tcc/EITC](http://www.tempe.gov/tcc/EITC)*

## SELF SUFFICIENCY, NOT WELFARE — THE EITC AT WORK —

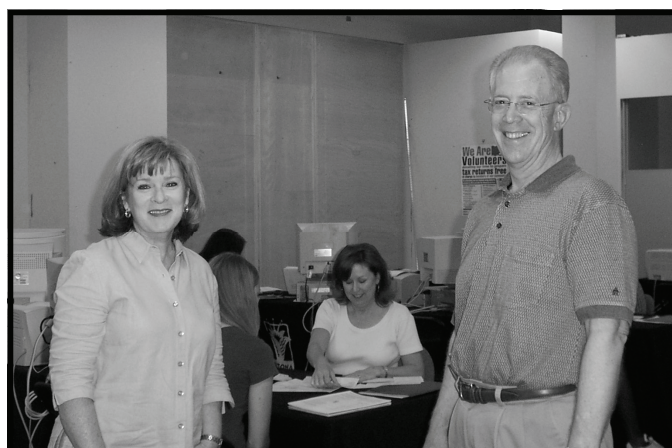
munity College – Guadalupe Campus. The sites will be open from January 22 through April 13, 2005.

In the past two years, Tempe Community Council, along with its initiative partners, has succeeded in returning over \$1,346,000.00 to Tempe residents. Although there remain thousands of eligible families who have not yet claimed the EITC, the initiative is working to help make families self sufficient and lift them out of poverty.

As part of this effort, the Tempe EITC Initiative is pleased to be teaming up with Newtown CDC, City of Tempe Housing Services and Chicanos Por La Causa to provide free, 2-hour asset development classes to low and moderate income individuals and families. Classes will begin on February 12, will be open to the general public and offered in both English and Spanish.

TCC is helping to make the EITC work for our community. For those most in need, the EITC helps make work pay to break the cycle of welfare

dependency; it offers those struggling to make ends meet an opportunity to save to purchase their own home or send their children to college; and it brings new money into our local economy, helping to lift all boats.



*TCC Executive Director Kate Hanley and Former Board Chair Wayne Ettenborough visit one of the many EITC tax preparation sites.*

### *Summary Data of Total Tax Refunds to Taxpayers at EITC Initiative VITA Sites*

| Tax Year | Number of Tax returns prepared | Federal Refund Total | Average Refund Without EITC | Average EITC Refund | Average Total Refund |
|----------|--------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| 2002     | 452                            | \$532,965            | \$708                       | \$1,820             | \$2,528              |
| 2003     | 773                            | \$813,369            | \$764                       | \$1,612             | \$2,376              |

### BOTTOM LINE

Although the EITC is by no means a magic cure-all to reduce Tempe's poverty rate—at 14.3 percent, it's the highest in the East Valley—it is one of several important and proven strategies. The EITC is only part of a solution, that includes available and affordable child care, housing, transportation and job training, to help families become self-sufficient. These strategies will only work within a strong economy. The early success of welfare reform has faltered, along with the economy. TCC, along with its community partners, continues to work to ensure supports are available to help families become self-sufficient and save for a better future.

## MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Weren't we just recently worrying about the millennial crisis when all of our computers would revert to 1900, erasing all progress in the last century? Fortunately, those fears were unfounded as time and progress seem to be moving forward at a rapid pace. It's hard to believe we are already five years into the new millennium.

In those five years, we've seen many accomplishments at TCC. As part of Tempe's People Improvement Plan (PIP), TCC has completed three citizen-based Task Forces: on homeless issues, Tempe's aging population and, most recently, disability issues. We are proud of the broad-base of citizen input received to develop recommendations in these vital areas to improve the quality of life for those most in need. Significant progress has been made in implementing the recommendations, such as the hiring of a homeless coordinator for Tempe, the establishment of the Tumbleweed Youth Day Resource Center and the awarding of the Piper Life Options grant to create a "Connections Café" at the Tempe Public Library, making resources available for our aging population.

As you've learned in this newsletter, we are also in the third year of a 3-year pilot program to increase the number of working families who claim the EITC. Although this tax credit has been around for nearly 30 years, it has become an increasingly valued tool for lifting people out of poverty and stimulating the local economy. Our progress is dependent on Tempe citizens' willingness to become involved, as each of these efforts require the support of a significant number of volunteers. We look forward to continued cooperation and collaborations in 2005.

Sincerely yours,

Katherine Hanley

## PROGRESS IN PLANNING

### *The Task Force on Disability Issues Report is Accepted by the City Council*

As a human service planning agency, one of TCC's primary goals is to encourage and facilitate community participation in identifying and developing solutions for meeting human service needs.

The Task Force on Disability Issues Report was presented to the Tempe City Council by the Task Force Co-Chairs Linda Spears and Scott Greeves on December 9, 2004.

The Task Force Report includes nine recommendations broadly grouped into the following categories: ADA Compliance and Enforcement; City

Infrastructure and Capital Maintenance; Recreation, Public Art and Culture; Opportunities for Children with Disabilities; Housing; Transportation; Employment and Training; and Information Exchange and Coordination. Two of the recommendations, however, were determined to be of high priority. Those were to:

- (1.) *Establish a Full Time Accessibility Specialist Position for Tempe; and*
- (2.) *Require the use of Universal Design and "Best Practices" for all new construction in Tempe.*

*The full report is available on the  
Tempe Community Council website:  
[www.tempe.gov/TCC](http://www.tempe.gov/TCC).*



## WE THANK YOU...

As we begin 2005, TCC would like to take a moment to thank all of our wonderful friends and partners who helped make 2004 such a remarkable year. Community is the essence of TCC, and we would not exist without the generous community of Tempe in which we operate. Be it a volunteer opportunity, a facility to host an event, or food for a hundred people, our generous partners help make our events and programs possible. For this, and all that you do, we thank you.

The **2004 Don Carlos Humanitarian Awards** Ceremony was truly a special occasion and compliments were abundant thanks to the fantastic food, (a carving station and even “turkey-tinis”), the beautiful facility, and musical entertainment, all donated this year. Please express your appreciation to the following people and establishments for their contributions.

*The Arizona Historical Museum  
Heidi's Events and Catering  
Alliance Beverage Distributing Company  
Hensley and Company  
Grilled Expedition  
The McKemy Fiddlers  
Lisa Marmur*

This Fall, *Shared Living Village* celebrated over 15 years of providing an innovative, affordable, independent living option for seniors. To mark this milestone, Tempe Community Council and Shared Living residents invited family member, friends and supporters of the program to an open house on November 21st. Shared Living Village residents greeted their guests with a culinary trip around the world as each home featured a different cuisine donated by the following restaurants:

*Bamboo Club                      Flip Flops  
The Olive Garden              Someburros*



*Shared Living Village Resident John Michael Sanders (right) and his family at the November 21st Open House event.*

The **8th Annual Stephen's Ace Hardware “Tooling Up for the Holidays”** benefit was a huge success this year, raising \$5,000 for Open Horizons Child and Family Development Center in Tempe. Open Horizons is a dropout prevention program for parenting teens in the Tempe Union High School District. We would like to express our deepest gratitude to **Steve Herrgesell**, owner of Stephen's Ace Hardware, members of the community, and the following door prize contributors:

|                                  |                                |                         |                          |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| <i>The Arizona Cardinals</i>     | <i>Chosa's Harley-Davidson</i> | <i>Jeepers!</i>         | <i>Phoenix Zoo</i>       |
| <i>The Arizona Diamondbacks</i>  | <i>Cookies from Home</i>       | <i>Lifetime Fitness</i> | <i>Uno Chicago Grill</i> |
| <i>Borders Books &amp; Music</i> | <i>Fiddlesticks</i>            | <i>Macaroni Grill</i>   | <i>Polar Ice</i>         |
| <i>Changing Hands Bookstore</i>  | <i>Gameworks</i>               | <i>Marvos</i>           | <i>Sanitors Services</i> |
| <i>Charles Brennen Studio</i>    | <i>Gordon Biersch</i>          | <i>Massage Envy</i>     | <i>Rita Spears</i>       |
| <i>Chili's Restaurant</i>        | <i>Hooters</i>                 | <i>McDuffy's</i>        | <i>Top of the Rock</i>   |
| <i>Whole Foods Market</i>        |                                |                         |                          |

## 21ST ANNUAL DON CARLOS HUMANITARIAN AWARD

### *Former City Councilmember Joseph Spracale is named the 2004 Don Carlos Humanitarian of the Year.*

Joe Spracale was presented with the 21<sup>st</sup> annual Don Carlos Humanitarian Award on Wednesday, November 3, 2004 at the Arizona Historical Society Museum, in Tempe. Named after Tempe's founder, Charles Trumbull "Don Carlos" Hayden, the award is given annually to recognize Tempeans for outstanding humanitarian service in the community.

Joe Spracale has lived in Tempe since 1948. His love of his community and dedication to its children, over the many years that he served as an elementary school teacher and then principal, is legendary. He served as principal of McKemy from 1972 until his retirement in 1991. Joe Spracale has served as a mentor and friend to several generations of Tempe youth. Though "retired," Joe's commitment to improving the lives of Tempe's children and families continues to this day. He is currently Executive Director and President of the Tempe Impact Educational Foundation and is a board member for "Connecting with Kids."

Service to his community has always been motivated by an enduring love of Tempe and its residents. Joe Spracale served on the Tempe City



*Joe Spracale (second from right), receiving congratulations from Mayor Hugh Hallman, Jim Simpson, Ralph Goitia and Jan Nicpon.*

Council from 1994 until 2000. He is a charter member of Sunrise Kiwanis Club of Tempe and is past president of the Tempe Community Impact Foundation, is a member of Tempe Sister Cities Organization, the Bill Krahn Heart Fund Committee, is president of Tempe Old Settlers, the Mayor's Committee on Prevention and Community Resources and has been a very active member of Tempe First United Methodist Church since 1954. Joe's dedication and commitment to the children of Tempe has been a lifelong passion. He is a true humanitarian, and Tempe is a better community because of his devoted service.

## 3RD ANNUAL HAYDEN YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT AWARD



*Carly Keller accepts her award from Tempe Mayor Hugh*

### *ASU Sophomore Carly Keller received the 3rd Annual Hayden Youth and Young Adult Award.*

As a Don Carlos Humanitarian in the making, Carly Keller was presented with the Hayden Youth and Young Adult Award at the Don Carlos Humanitarian Awards Reception.

Carly is a 19 year old sophomore at ASU. While her volunteer activities span many areas of community service, her focus on building youth awareness to promote peace and understanding throughout the world is of primary importance to her. This desire was instilled through her experiences as a Sister City exchange delegate to Regensburg, Germany and, earlier, as a middle school student when she participated in "Hands Across the Border." Carly has served as President of Tempe Sister Cities Youth Group, and she was recently elected to serve as president of the Sister Cities International Youth Program.

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS...

*The Tempe Empty Bowls event will be expanding to two days.*

The fourth annual Tempe Empty Bowls event will be held from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Friday, February 25th at the 6<sup>th</sup> Street Park (next to City Hall) and at the same time on Saturday, February 26th at Tempe Town Lake. Empty Bowls is a charity event that supports the United Food Bank's Kids Café programs in Tempe. Nearly 300 children each day receive a meal or nutritious snack at Kids' Café host sites in Tempe.

Tempe area high school and middle school students, ASU students and local potters create ceramic bowls throughout the year that are purchased for a minimum donation of \$10 at the event. Along with their bowl, participants receive a simple meal of soup, bread and water, reflective of the caloric amount that many around the world survive on for the entire day.

The event is organized by a group of dedicated community volunteers who partner with Tempe Community Council to provide administrative and staff support.

In addition to Tempe Community Council, event sponsors include the City of Tempe, Whole Foods Market, SRP, Motorola and Marjon Ceramics.

*Donate your holiday formals to help make dreams come true*

The Cinderella Affair makes attending prom affordable by distributing new and gently used formal wear at an annual boutique where female junior and senior high school students may select a dress and accessories free of charge.

The 3rd Annual Cinderella Affair will take place on April 8, 2005 for students of the Tempe Union High School District and on April 9 for all valley-area high school juniors and seniors. The event will be held at the Tempe Pyle Adult Recreation Center, 655 E. Southern Ave., Tempe.

A Valley-wide dress drive will be held from February 12th through the 19th. Donations of new and gently used formals, purses, shoes, jewelry, wraps, and tuxedos will be welcomed at the following drop off centers in Tempe:

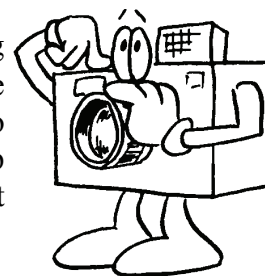


Tempe Community Council  
(34 E. 7th St., Bldg. A)  
Pyle Adult Recreation  
Center (655 E. Southern  
Ave.)

For more information, visit  
[www.cinderellaaffair.com](http://www.cinderellaaffair.com)

## HOW DO YOU PICTURE TEMPE AS A FAMILY-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY?

Communities For Kids is hosting its first "C.L.I.C.C." (Children Living In Caring Communities) photo contest, open to Tempe residents of all ages. Photos will be judged on how well they capture Tempe as a "Family-Friendly" community. Photo submissions will be limited to one per person, and must be 4"x6". Residents can drop off their pictures at one of the five Walgreens Photo Centers located in Tempe or at Tempe Community Council, 34th East 7th Street, Bldg. A.



The following information must be included with the photograph: name, age, phone number and/or email. Photos will not be returned. The deadline for submission is Friday, February 11, 2005.

First, second and third place winners will all win prizes. For more information, contact Christine Bartlett at 480-858-2467 or visit <http://community.tempe.gov/children>.

## WINTER 2005 CALENDAR

| JANUARY  | FEBRUARY   | MARCH   |
|--|--|---|
| <b>1</b> <b>New Year's Day</b><br>(TCC Closed)<br><br><b>5</b> <b>TCC Board Meeting</b><br><br><b>17</b> <b>MLK Day</b><br><b>Diversity Awards</b><br><b>Brunch</b><br>(TCC Closed)<br><br><b>24-28</b> <b>Agency Review</b><br><b>Agency Interviews</b><br><br><b>25</b> <b>TCC Executive</b><br><b>Committee Meeting</b><br><br><b>26</b> <b>East Valley Resource</b><br><b>Committee (EVRC)</b><br><b>Meeting</b> | <b>2</b> <b>TCC Board Meeting</b><br><br><b>5</b> <b>East Valley Regional</b><br><b>Unity Walk and Diversity</b><br><b>Festival</b><br><br><b>11</b> <b>C.L.I.C.C. (Children Liv-</b><br><b>ing in Caring Communi-</b><br><b>ties) Photo Contest Dead-</b><br><b>line for photo submissions.</b><br><br><b>17</b> <b>Agency Review, Final</b><br><b>Meeting</b><br><br><b>21</b> <b>Presidents Day</b><br>(TCC Closed)<br><br><b>22</b> <b>TCC Executive</b><br><b>Committee Meeting</b><br><br><b>25</b> <b>Tempe Empty Bowls</b><br><b>(6th Street Park)</b><br><br><b>26</b> <b>Tempe Empty Bowls</b><br><b>(Tempe Town Lake)</b> | <b>2</b> <b>TCC Board Meeting</b><br><br><b>5</b> <b>Tempe Governor's Ball</b><br><br><b>5</b> <b>Tempe Cares</b><br><br><b>5</b> <b>2005 Youthfest</b><br><br><b>29</b> <b>TCC Executive</b><br><b>Committee Meeting</b><br><br><b>31</b> <b>Caesar Chavez Day</b><br>(TCC Closed) |

*For confirmation and further details of meetings and events listed above, please call (480) 858-2300*



**Tempe  
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